



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Walla Walla District

News Release

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Contact: Public Affairs Office

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Phone: (509) 527-7020

Mill Creek staff announce Winter recreation opportunities

WALLA WALLA, Wash. – Winter can be a wonderful time to enjoy U.S. Army Corps of Engineer recreation facilities at Rooks Park and the Bennington Lake area, operated by the Walla Walla District.

Outdoors enthusiasts can enjoy scenic views while taking advantage of picnicking, hunting, fishing and boating opportunities at Mill Creek recreation sites. Rooks Park, Bennington Lake and the Mill Creek Office provide recreational day-use facilities and visitor access to more than 20 miles of multiple-use trails.

Starting Oct. 15, water will be turned off in all public restrooms and drinking fountains to avoid freezing during winter weather conditions; portable toilets are provided for seasonal use.

Park rangers ask visitors to remember safety whenever playing in, on or near the water. Here are a few safety tips District park rangers hope visitors will remember while having fun at Corps lakes and recreation facilities: when boating, wear properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life preservers; and don't consume intoxicants when operating recreational vessels. Boaters must ensure personal floatation devices are on board for each person – children 12 and younger are required to wear PFDs when in a boat. State boating, hunting and fishing regulations apply to visitors at Corps sites. Hunting on Corps property is allowed in designated areas only. Some areas have local restrictions on open fires, so remember to check with park managers and rangers when visiting. Keep in mind that alcoholic beverages are not permitted in Corps-managed Mill Creek recreation areas.

Colder temperatures increase the risk of hypothermia occurring when exposed to cold and/or damp weather conditions for long periods of time or when swimming in cold water. Hypothermia results when a person experiences a critical lowering of core body temperature, so stay warm and dry while enjoying autumn outdoor recreation.

Contact information unless stated otherwise: Rooks Park and Bennington Lake area. Telephone: (509) 527-7160. Email: MillCreek@usace.army.mil.

Mill Creek Office – open 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday; closed on federal holidays. *Getting there:* from Hwy. 12 at the east end of Walla Walla, exit south onto Tausick Way, continue past Walla Walla Community College, immediately on the south side of the Mill Creek crossing, turn left onto Reservoir Road and follow it about 1 mile to the office, located on the left side of the road.

Rooks Park – gates are closed to vehicles Oct. 15 through March 31; the park is open year-round to pedestrian traffic from 7 a.m. until sunset. *Facilities:* day-use area, picnic shelter, playground, restrooms and horseshoe pits. Pets must be on a leash. *Getting there:* from Hwy. 12 at the east end of Walla Walla, exit south onto Tausick Way, at the stop light, turn west onto Mill Creek Road and follow it 1 mile to Rooks Park Road on the right.

Bennington Lake Recreation Area – open year-round, 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. *Facilities:* day-use area, picnic shelters, boat ramp, pedestrian/horseback-riding trails, hunting, fishing. *Getting there:* from Hwy. 12 at the east end of Walla Walla, exit south onto Tausick Way, continue past Walla Walla Community College, immediately on the south side of the Mill Creek crossing, turn left onto Reservoir Road and follow it to the lake.

Mill Creek Recreation Trail – open year-round. *Facilities:* day-use area, pedestrian, roller-blade and bicycle traffic are allowed on paved trail. Pets must be on a leash. The trail follows Mill Creek from the city of Walla Walla to Rooks Park, forming part of a network of over 20 miles of multiple-purpose trails. Parking as well as access to these trails can be found at Rooks Park, Bennington Lake and the Mill Creek Office.

For more information about Walla Walla District's outdoor recreation opportunities, check out their Web site at: www.nww.usace.army.mil/corpsoutdoors/.

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Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 201 N. Third Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Phone (509) 527-7020 FAX (509) 527-7824

Website: www.nww.usace.army.mil

E-mail: cenww-pa@usace.army.mil